

SUPPORT H.B. 548

HELP CURB PUPPY MILLS, POORLY RUN RESCUES AND PAINFUL CONSUMER PUPPY EXPERIENCES BY REGULATING FACILITIES THAT BREED, SELL OR OFFER DOGS FOR ADOPTION

HB 548 will create an effective and comprehensive law to help insure that dogs bred and sold in Montana live in a humane environment and receive adequate care by requiring an inspection by the state veterinarian. The facilities to be inspected include commercial breeders, pet stores, government and private animal rescue shelters and humane societies that maintain 20 breeding animals or sell more than 20 dogs or puppies a year. The purpose of this bill is to protect dogs in our state and discourage the proliferation of "puppy mills," overcrowded shelters and those few that offer unhealthy animals to the public for adoption.

What is a Puppy Mill?

Puppy mills are large-scale commercial dog breeding operations that mass-produce puppies for retail sale in pet stores and over the Internet. Focused solely on making a profit, these facilities keep dogs in crowded, filthy conditions where they receive little or no socialization, affection or exercise. Puppies are removed from their mothers at a very young age, when they are still physically and behaviorally vulnerable. Puppy mills produce untold numbers of puppies that end up being sold to "impulse buyers," who ultimately surrender them to animal shelters, where they are often euthanized. The father and mother dogs at puppy mills – called "breeding stock" by the operators – endure a lifetime of suffering. They must live in small crates or cages, where they churn out litter after litter of puppies. They receive little or no socialization and often exhibit severe behavioral and genetic abnormalities. When they no longer produce a profit, they are simply discarded or killed.

The unwitting consumer who buys a puppy from a pet store or over the Internet may be unaware that they are supporting an industry that thrives on cruelty. But they may also be acquiring a tragic and expensive problem. Puppy mill puppies often arrive with a host of behavioral, genetic and physical problems, from congenital heart defects and fear-biting to parvo virus and respiratory infections. The consumer's ability to pursue legal recourse against the breeder may be limited, leaving the consumer with nothing but vet bills and the heartbreak of watching their puppy suffer.

Puppy Mills & Adoption of Sick Puppies are a Problem in Montana and Drain State & Private Resources.

- Montana has seen more than its share of emergency animal shelters caused by alleged puppy mill operations across the state. Camp Collie cost Toole and Cascade Counties nearly a quarter of a million dollars to address the 200 collies and 11 cats in that case. It took 13 months from the day of confiscation for Camp Collie dogs to go from feces-filled crates to loving lifelong homes. There are dozens of puppy mill cases that never get widespread media attention. A recent confiscation in Billings involved 488 dogs and another in Big Sandy resulted in rescue of 200.

- A pending case of cruelty to animals at an alleged puppy mill in eastern Montana is costing Yellowstone County tens of thousands of dollars to hold 189 adult dogs and the resulting litters born after confiscation. This scenario could have been prevented if the mandatory inspection component of this proposed law would have been in place. It is easier, more efficient and less costly to deal with these cases with 30-40 animals than when they reach 300-400 animals.
- Sick puppies: The largest single complaint from consumers and veterinary practices against local shelters, rescues and pet stores is that they continue to offer sick and sometimes dying puppies for adoption. There are voluntary pre-adoption protocols to minimize the chance that someone who takes a new puppy home will have to spend thousands of dollars on emergency health care or, worse yet, watch their new family member expire from disease. These proven pre-adoption protocols can be made mandatory by the administrative rules imposed as part of the licensing agreement required by HB 548.
- No county or community is exempt from complaints of puppy mills or consumer complaints against puppy mills, pet stores or shelters. These complaints lead to investigations, temporary foster care needs and veterinary medical expenses that drain the budgets of all affected agencies. This bill is proactive and attempts to apply the resources up front so that large scale emergency shelters and long expensive court cases can be minimized.

Current laws are ineffective to deal with the problems created by puppy mills and other uninspected facilities that sell dogs. MONTANA CURRENTLY HAS NO REQUIREMENT TO INSPECT OR REGULATE FACILITIES THAT BREED, SELL OR OFFER DOGS FOR ADOPTION.

What will this Bill Do?

HB 548 will create an effective and comprehensive law that will regulate facilities that breed dogs for sale or sell dogs and puppies. Facilities would be required to provide adequate housing facilities, special provisions for dogs with nursing puppies, protection from weather, ventilation, temperature control, lighting and other standards considered appropriate for humane and proper care of dogs and puppies.

Breeders and sellers will be forced to follow minimum standards and provide their animals with consistent care. HB 548 will provide dogs in breeding operations and other facilities the best hope for a better life and offer consumers some reassurances of where they can find healthy lifelong companions.

***PLEASE SUPPORT HB 548 TO HELP PROTECT MONTANA
DOGS AND PUPPIES***

*For additional information, please contact
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Montana State Legislature

2009 Session

Exhibit: 3

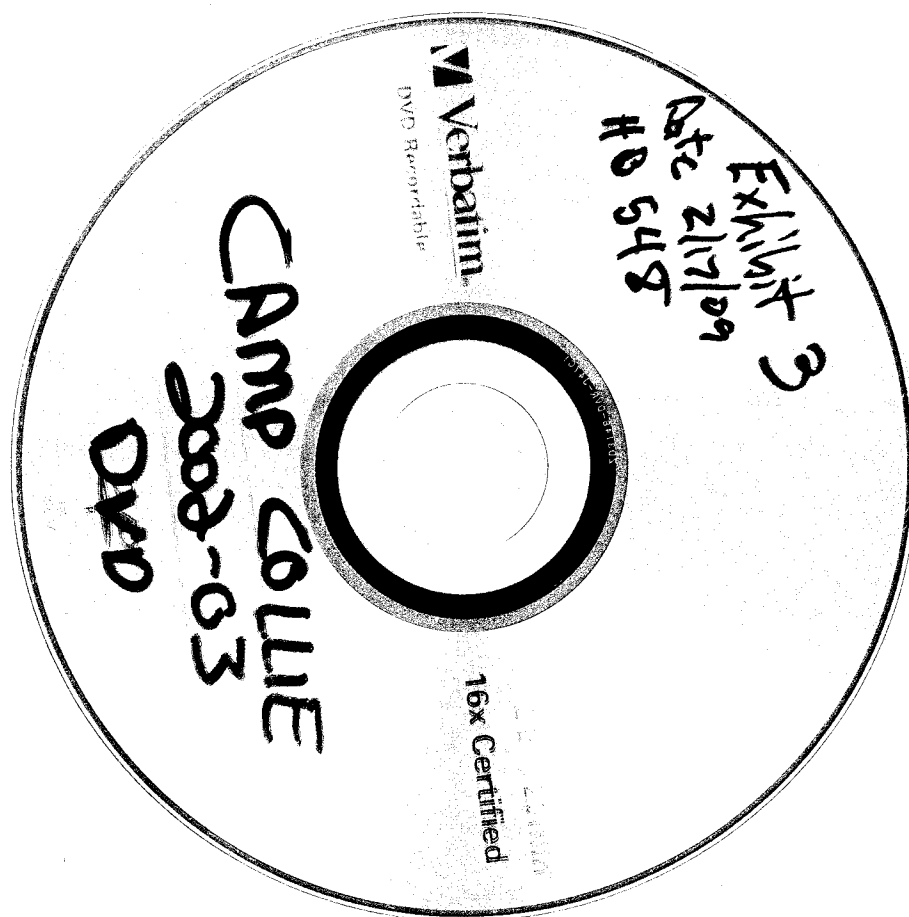
This exhibit is 10 DVD's.

Entitled: Camp Collie 2002-03 DVD

**The original exhibit is on file at the
Montana Historical Society and may
be viewed there.**

**Montana Historical Society
Archives, 225 N. Roberts, Helena,
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There are
10 copies of
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2009 Session

Exhibit: 3

**This exhibit is 9 video recording
tapes.**

**Entitled: The Humane Society
Of the United States
Camp Collie**

**The original exhibit is on file at the
Montana Historical Society and may
be viewed there.**

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**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

Camp Collie
TRT: 6 minutes
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Exhibit 3
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**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES.**

CAMP COLLIE

TRT: 6:55
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